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PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

Congregational Church

IN OTISCO, N. Y.,

AT THE CLOSE OF ITS

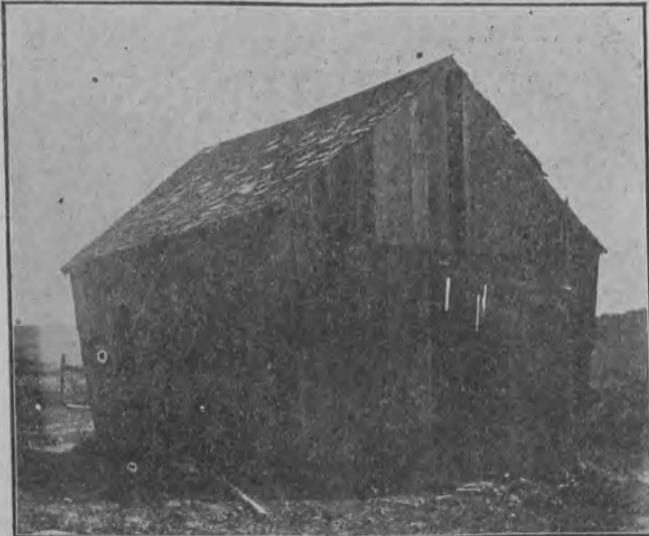
FIRST ONE HUNDRED YEARS.

1803---1903.

SYRACUSE, N. Y.:
G. F. FAILING, PUBLISHER.

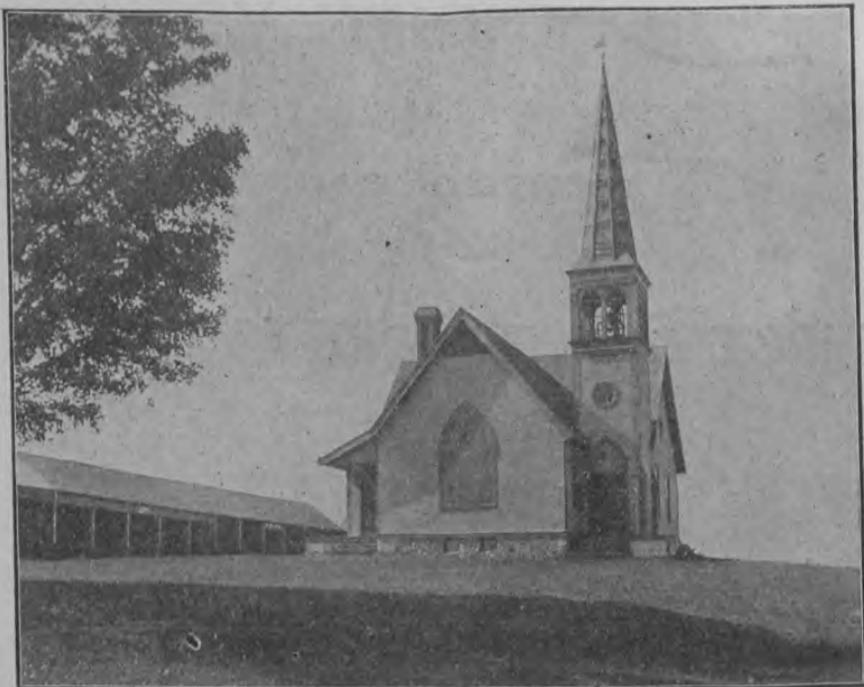
1903.

SYRACUSE PUBLIC LIBRARY.



(Photo by Mrs. Lester Judson)

This is a picture of the place in which the Congregational Church of Otisco was organized 9th May, 1803. It was owned by Elias Thayer, and used for a corn-house.



(Photo by Mrs. Lester Judson)

The Congregational Church of Otisco, N. Y., organized May 6, 1803. The first edifice built in 1807, the second in 1817, the present in 1892.

CENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE MAY 10, 1903.

TO THE CLERGY AND LAITY OF THE WASHINGTON
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY, OF OTISCO, N. Y.

The undersigned, to whom was committed the matter of arrangement and publication of papers read at the Congregational Church at its recent Centennial observance, beg leave to report by submitting this pamphlet.

Your committee have added some other matter which will at least help to form a skeleton history of the church.

Trusting that our labor will meet your approval, we remain
Very truly yours,

E. P. Howe,
E. W. King,
S. N. Cowles,
Committee.

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

MORNING—Organ Prelude and Doxology, Invocation—Rev. W. C. Bailey.

Reading Scriptures—Rev. J. E. Beecher.

Prayer—Rev. W. H. Wellington.

Anthem—Choir.

Historical Address—E. P. Howe.

Selection by the Choir.

Letters from absent friends.

Remarks from Dea. H. L. Cowles and Rev. W. C. Bailey.

Greeting—Rev. David G. Smith, read by W. G. Smith.

Hymn. Benediction.

EVENING—Anthem—Choir.

Reading Scriptures—Rev. A. Crissy.

Prayer—Rev. George Jones.

Response—Choir.

Hymn—Congregation.

Sermon—Rev. J. E. Beecher.

Solo—Miss Mabel Clark.

Address—Mr. J. T. Roberts.

Hymn—Congregation.

Address—Rev. Wm. B. Dada, read by Miss Sophronia Munson.

Hymn. Benediction—Rev. George Jones.

HISTORICAL PAPER.

BY E. P. HOWE, SYRACUSE, N. Y.

A summons comes from my native heather which I dare not disregard—A call to speak of the best educator and the strongest power the town has ever known.

This appointment came as a surprise, and, if I fail to interest, you may look to the committee making the selection.

Without intentionally invading any subject assigned to any other speaker, I would briefly show the type and condition of the men and women forming the Congregational Church of Otisco, N. Y. They were largely from Western Massachusetts; some from Connecticut, but many of them were pioneers in their eastern homes.

In the spring of 1799 Oliver Tuttle and two sons Daniel and William came on the Rice farm, formerly Uncle Eben Cowles, at the head of Otisco Lake and began the first work of preparing a home, returning to their family in the autumn, where they remained for three years before returning.

In the spring of 1801 Chauncey Rust came to the north part of the town and the first night slept under the body of a fallen tree on the farm now owned by Mr. Charles P. Edinger. A year later Apollos King came with his family and the first night they slept under the body of a tree a little below the site of Mr. E. W. King's barns.

No doubt a score of such instances occurred within the town. Hardwork, fatigue, privation and stern necessity were constant attendants upon the noble men and women, and these, daily inwrought into their every-day life, made them strong, self-poised, brave and invincible.

The men after much grubbing among the stumps sowed their wheat, cut it with a sickle, thrashed it with a flail and winnowed it by hand, and drew it to Albany. They would take a load of wheat, put in feed for the team and provisions enough for the driver, returning in ten days or two weeks with one dollar for each bushel.

The women received the swinging tow from the hands of the men, carded it into rolls, spun it into threads, wove it into cloth, then made it into garments for the family.

In the year 1805 Dorris French, afterward the wife of Perley Howe, and her

brother Ashbel French, at ten and eight years of age respectively, walked over three miles daily to attend school.

Thus were men, women and children all harnessed to the most exacting toil.

During the summer of 1801 two or three families and parts of other families had come to that part of the town in which Mr. Rust lived, and in the month of September of that year the first religious public meeting was held on Sunday at the house of Mr. Rust. The services consisted of prayers, singing and reading of a printed sermon, and were maintained for many years after the church was organized; and as the population increased, the various sections of the town kept up similar services. It was not an infrequent occurrence on a cold winter night for a sheep and lamb to be huddled into one corner, a trundle bed of children in another, while the rest of the one-roomed house was occupied by humble worshippers engaged in intercessions with their Redeemer.

In the autumn of 1802 a Rev. Mr. Robbins, a Missionary from Litchfield Co. Connecticut, preached the first sermon in the town. The little settlement was hungry for the living preacher, and it is a recorded fact that of some forty people in the town, every one was present on that occasion.

In the early spring of 1803 a Rev. Mr. Fish sent by the General Assembly made a proposition to form a Presbyterian Church, assist in erecting a church edifice and give them a living preacher. They were not an obstinate people but they knew pretty nearly what they wanted, some of them were fresh from the Battle Fields of the Revolution—all were inspired by the stirring blasts of freedom which came welling up from the young republic just bursting its swaddling clothes and marching on in grand career. All felt the weight of unborn tenants of the forest resting upon them and they could not be otherwise than brave, and they made their own choice.

On the 9th day of May, 1803, Rev. Hugh Wallis, from the Congregational Church of the town of Pompey, met those desiring the formation of a church and it was duly declared a visible branch of Christ's Church. Doubtless other persons, laymen from adjacent churches were present, but of this we have no knowledge. The sun shone down brightly on that one of God's "first temples" with splendor and warmth, affording a very pleasing omen.

The organization was in a church, no—in a school-house, no—in a ball-room of a hotel, no, neither of such buildings had an existence—but a small cornhouse then belonging to Mr. Elias Thayer who lived just across the street from the north school-house. This weird nestling place of the church has withstood the wintry blasts of 100 years—has outlived two churches, and Mr. Smith informs me that in recent years, it has been covered with boards of oak and now bids fair to be in existence at the next Centennial. Eleven persons constituted the church as it stood at the close of that day—namely; Charles Merriman, Rachel Merriman, his wife, Samuel French, Benjamin Cowles, Phineas Sparks, Oliver Tuttle and Abigail Tuttle, his wife, Ebenezer French, Amos Cowles, Luther French and Solomon Judd.

Two women and nine men. This disparity between the sexes I account for in this way: with Rev. Mr. Wallis, something of a delegation probably went along to be present and assist in the formation of the new church; others may have been there from adjoining churches and all must be entertained. No hotel was in existence there, but all must be fed. The wives of five were doubtless at home getting dinner for the visitors and became members within the year, and probably at the first opportunity thereafter.

Notice how this little band were separated. Oliver Tuttle lived on the Rice farm at the head of Otisco Lake, four miles away from the location of the place of organization. Farther east and south about the same distance away lived Ebenezer and Luther French, while Phineas Sparks lived in the extreme border of the town, to the north and east; within a triangle indicated by these three residences, were the homes of the other six, but widely separated. They had not the privilege we have of deep soft mud roads, but in place of these, cradle knolls, carpeted with twigs and roots to trip their feet, and blazed trees for guides.

The personal of the original members would show much of interest. Of Charles Merriman I can say nothing; Rachel, his wife, was sister to Dea. Amos and Benjamin Cowles, and descended from John Cowles, who came from England and settled in Farmington Ct., in 1635. A large number of large families characterize his posterity, and embrace many of the learned professions.

Dea. Samuel French, Ebenezer and Luther were kinsmen, their ancestors coming to this country early in 1600, and embraced the name of Edwards from Wales, and Lieut. William Clark and Elder John Strong, of robust Christianity, from England. Ebenezer and his father Ebenezer both went as minute men on hearing of the battle of Lexington, and Ebenezer enlisted afterward and was in the army under Washington at the crossing of the Delaware, where he received an injury to his index finger, causing amputation. Luther was son of Ebenezer, unmarried at the time the church was formed, he became a Physician and the best loved man in the town.

Of Phineas Sparks I can simply say that he was a kinsman of the historian, the late Jared Sparks of national fame.

Oliver Tuttle's ancestry reaches back to the 16th century, and is imbued with the same blood that enriched the lives of a Wadsworth, Longfellow and the saintly Jonathan Edwards.

Solomon Judd's ancestry is traceable for an equal distance.

With Otisco peopled with such men and women and others like them, is it any wonder that Mr. Oliver R. Strong, a prosperous merchant of Onondaga Hill, should make a standing order to his clerks to trust any man from Otisco for any amount of goods he wanted. Mr. Strong said this on the judgment of a careful business man, and as a Christian gentleman.

Do the same conditions exist to-day? You know, and God knows, I bring

no accusation against this good old town, this cradle of so many fond memories, but if it is not true, then by all that is sacred in the past, or hopeful in the future, let every man, woman and child unite in one grand effort to swing it back to its original mooring and make Hannibals of those who come after to keep it there.

In July the 18th, 1803, Samuel French was appointed the first deacon of the church and Amos Cowles the second.

On the 1st day of October, 1804, a meeting was held for the purpose of forming a religious society, which society was formed under the style and title of the Washington Religious Society of Otisco, N. Y. They selected for the first trustees, Amos Cowles, Lemon Gaylord, Charles Merriman, Elias Thayre, Luther French and Gideon Seely.

They now have a church, an organized religious society, but no holy temple in which to worship, no living preacher, but they continued for four long years holding their meetings regularly at the cabin of the different settlers.

Rev. Geo. Colton of West Hartford, Connecticut, was called to the pastorate in the fall of 1805. Although he remained but a few months, he was an earnest student, constant in his work, giving himself little rest. As an illustration of his manner of taking his ease, the following may be cited. Years after he had left his church, and had taken charge of some church in the east, he would return and spend his vacation at the home of his brother-in-law, Mr. Theron Cowles, who then lived in Syracuse. The first morning after his arrival, he would take Mr. Cowles, horse and carriage and drive to the home of Rev. Richard S. Corning, who lived where the 4th Presbyterian Church now stands, borrow from Mr. Corning's choice library as many books as the carriage would hold, go back to Mr. Cowles, and hardly be seen on the street again till he went to return the books at the end of his vacation. First calls to meals were unheeded, and thus his vacations were spent, literally glued to study. He was a droll man; I don't think there was the slightest effort on his part to say anything for effect, or to ape anyone. Another case of the boy's whistle—it whistled itself. Some comment was indulged in by this extract in one of his prayers: "Bless all ministers and their flocks, all teachers and their pupils, all doctors and their patients, all good and honest lawyers, if any such there be, and their clients." On another occasion: "Finally bring us all home to Thee in Heaven, where there are no Dutch, no Irish but where all are one in Christ Jesus, amen." Now before condemning Mr. Colton to everlasting obloquy, we should remember that he was reared during a period when the bitterness created by the war with Great Britain was most violent, when the English and all they did were hated, when they knew that British gold was freely used to bring over that miserable gang of unhung cutthroats from Hasse Cassel to shoot down our soldiers, butcher their wives and brain their children, when the brutal Irishman Cunningham could with fiendish glee deny the patriot Nathan Hale the consolation of reading a few words from holy writ just before

his execution. All such atrocities were long to be remembered.

Now, all is changed. The gentle German with his thrift and industrious habits is made welcome and becomes a good citizen, and we accept the smart Irishman and give him the office of policeman as soon as he passes the gates of Castle Garden.

Mr. Colton educated his six sons by sending them through Yale College, and they did not go through because they could throw a ball, row a boat, or were in possession of brass shins to withstand the cruel warfare of football, but they were graduated by virtue of the result of hard study, and three of them became prominent, each in his profession.

I have dwelt upon Mr. Colton and his surroundings on account of his being the first minister of the church.

The first church was erected in 1807 and stood on land owned by Mr. Thomas Parent, nearly opposite your present creamery, and was used as such for ten years, when a much larger one was built on the site of the present church, and the old one was afterwards drawn to the site now occupied by Mr. Poples' mill and used as a dwelling. A fact perhaps not generally known by the present generation is this: No stove or furnace ever warmed that church; but the small foot-stove so common in those days. Then they held a morning and afternoon service and between the services the good old mothers would go over to Mr. Merrimans and get their stoves refilled with live coals for afternoon service.

These old founders were human and had their defects; we pass them by; but they had their virtues. They, with a sufficient number like them would supply the answer to the question of Sir William Jones who asked "What Constitutes a State?"

No! Men, high-minded men,
With powers as far above dull brutes endowed
In forest, brake or den,
As beasts excel cold rocks or brambles rude:
Men who their *duties* know,
But know their *rights*, and knowing dare maintain;
Prevent the long aim'd blow,
And crush the tyrant while they rend the chain.

Had duty called them to war, they would have been found in the fore front of battle—and I would wager a guinea that a crop of Molly Pitchers would have been with them. Had red-handed persecution raged around them, they would have marched to the scaffold or the stake with intrepid step and beheld with rapture the opening gates to the eternal morning.

But theirs were the victories of peace. When a new family came into the woods to settle, the door of the one-roomed cabin swung wide open, bidding them welcome 'till another roof-tree could be erected. If one of them sold a bushel of wheat the purchaser received a full bushel, never less, sometimes

more. When the fatted calf was killed, each near-by neighbor was given a portion. The widow bereft of everything but a houseful of unshepherded children, experienced the working of warm hearts, and willing hands, in filling her yard with wood and seeing that her larder was never empty. A beautiful practice was once in vogue in this church, the last remnant of which I used to see in my young boyhood. In a time of sickness, the clergyman at the afternoon service would announce the critical condition of some sick person, and then ask for volunteers to care for the sick for that night. One would rise in one part of the house and one in another and then another set responded for Monday night and so right through the week.

The fragrance of these and kindred acts of charity, enriched the givers, united the community, built up the church, and erected an altar on every hill-top. They were doers of the word, and their reward is secure. Would that all churches would multiply its activities in this direction; how it would strengthen such as do stand, comfort and help the weak-hearted, raise up those who fall, place the church under God, where she rightfully belongs, the almoner of all good.

It may be a matter of surprise to be told that of the more than two hundred churches now in this county, the Otisco Congregational Church stands fifth in the order of their creation; that it is third in age of the Congregational Churches of this County, Pompey and Elbridge only being older; that of only three persons ever living in Otisco to be one hundred years old, each were members of this church, viz: Mrs. Polly Stewart Bardwell, Mrs. Rachel Merriman, Squire Andrews and Mrs. Hannah Cleveland King.

I have not the statistics for to-day, but as far back as July 3rd, 1864, the church had numbered 879 members—had given letters to a large number who had gone forth to bless and enrich other churches. Verily this active church remote from commercial centers, almost blockaded by the snows of winter, and by nature's everlasting bulwark of hills the entire year—located in this Switzerland of Onondaga Co., hath done what she could to elevate and redeem the world, and every loyal son and daughter of Otisco with unbroken acclaim will say, blessed be the memory of those pioneers.

LETTERS.

Sibley, Kas., May 4, 1903.

To the Church in Otisco, Greeting.

I have longed for many years to be present at the Centennial of the settlement of my native town, but circumstances seem to forbid. I often look back to the old church members as I saw them from 1840 to 1850. The later Deacons were young men and boys at that time. The laity of the church were the families of Cowles, Gaylord, King, Howe, Darrow, Bardwell, Goodwin, Dada, Rice, Noyes, Clark, Bostwick, Maxwell, Whitcomb, Pomeroy, Hulbert, Johnson,

Munson, Graves, Pelton, Searl, Smith, Kingsley, Baker, Wilkin, Hotchkiss, Hale, Strong, Frisbie. A strong band of men and women working for the right—a band any town or church may well be proud of, but now they and their children are scattered to the ends of the nation. Their influence for righteousness can only be known when the books are posted.

May God's blessing rest on old Otisco and her church.

Fraternally,

E. C. COWLES.

Boulder, Colorado, May 4, 1903.

MY DEAR OTISCO FRIENDS:—

It gives me much pleasure to greet you on this happy occasion. Perhaps few of you can imagine the warmth of heart which I feel toward you. A man with a sick body seems almost nobody, so cold, so wretched. Such to my great sorrow, was my lot even when I last visited among you.

How can I ever thank the Otisco people for the noble response which they made to all that I sought to call them to; and for their kind appreciation? The friendship I formed will endure through all time.

* * * Character-building, as many of you will remember, was the key-note of my ministry to you. Continue on.

Most sincerely your former pastor and abiding friend,

F. B. FRASER.

Sandoval, May 7th, 1903.

TO ALL THE DEAR FRIENDS, GREETING,

We received your kind invitation to be present at the 100th anniversary of the forming of the church in our old home, Otisco, N. Y. We would like very much to be present with you all. The long list of members who were enrolled before we left are widely scattered and thinned out. How many memories rush at the thought of your meeting. How wonderfully God has blessed the fathers and mothers and their children also who gathered under the roof.

I have much to rejoice over the last prayer I ever heard my father make. It was just as I bade him good-bye: "May the blessing of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob rest upon this daughter, her children, her children's children unto the 3d and 4th generation, amen. I feel that the blessing has been given me.

The light of that church has been seen far off on other shores, and from many a missionary home the prayer has gone forth for God's blessing on your labors there.

We all wish you much joy, and when the roll call is sounded over the "River" we will be there.

Yours in love and kindly remembrance,

CORDELIA C. GAYLORD.

PERRY B. GAYLORD.

Manchester, Iowa, May 6, 1903.

DEACON ELLIS, MY DEAR FRIEND:—

It would afford me great pleasure to be with you on this centennial occasion, for I owe much to the church of Otisco and I know hundreds of others would say the same.

The eleven persons who united to form that church in the wilderness, laid the foundation for the town; and of that number, I can by blood or affinity, claim relationship to nine, and might in one sense be called a child of the church. I am sure I feel a filial regard for the church of my boyhood days.

My parents are with me and deeply regret their inability to be there; for they count among their choicest friends surviving members of the Otisco church.

May God bless that church abundantly in the future even as in the past.

We wish to send our regrets to the pastors we have known and loved, and to the lay members.

Very sincerely,

HENRY W. TUTTLE.

Des Moines, Iowa, May 1, 1903.

MR. SAMUEL N. COWLES,

DEAR BROTHER:—

So an Otisco church is reaching to its centennial. I should very much enjoy being in Otisco on the 10 inst., but the distance is very great and my engagements these days are many. I remember very many things in connection with the church of my boyhood which give me real pleasure in the review. The attendance of those country people coming so far as many of them did to the service, seems to me now almost phenomenal. How the teams did come from the east and the west, the north and the south, and filled the sheds while families sat down—not in the Kingdom of Heaven, exactly, but in a vestibule and preparatory school of that kingdom. The Cowles, the Gaylords, the Howes, the Kings, the Rices, the Munsons, the Kingsleys, the Wilkins and many more whom I used to see gathering with the Frisbies. It was a great and goodly company. I have known nothing like it since, though I have had to do with larger congregations. But there and then the Sunday brought an uprising of the people—a staunch, sane, intelligent and moral community.

As I look back, it appears to me that the young people first really found themselves, (at least, the young people of my generation) under the ministry of Rev. A. K. Strong, who did very much for us, especially in the Young People's Missionary Society and in many other ways. He helped very much in bringing to us the means of enlarged intelligence and higher ideals. Surely it is not an old man's fancy, that there was a rare company of young people in Otisco well compacted together during his ministry.

Things have changed greatly with the dying out and removal of families, so that the earlier stock is reduced in numbers. Visiting my dear brother

Tyler, a little while before his death, last year, it seemed to me as I looked into the old valley which was home to me so long, that I should never see it again—nor is it likely that I shall, for age is creeping upon me and when I go back—in thought to early days and almost feel that I am a boy again, I am obliged to remember that my birthday was in A. D. 1830. It would give me pleasure of no small degree if I might be with the people of the church of to-day when the anniversary comes.

I shall think of it at the time and hope that the church may enter upon its second century with good courage and prospects of continued life and, if it may be, of increasing usefulness.

May the head of the church bless and gladden and prosper the Otisco church for many years to come.

My greeting, as one of the Otisco boys to the people, at its anniversary of one-hundred years.

Yours sincerely,

ALVAH L. FRISBIE.

GREETINGS TO THE OTISCO CHURCH

On the occasion of the One Hundredth Anniversary.

By Rev. David Garrett Smith.

Adown the mystic heights of long ago,
A century of years draws to a close,
The past a tribute to the present brings,
The present quickly to the future goes,

Nor pauses for a day,
Save anniversary.

Stay for a trice, O Time, that we may praise,
Rehearse the story of thy glorious past ;
It is a tale that bards might long to tell,
Already written on heart tablets fast,

So that the eye of man
May only feebly scan.

Out of thy past we hail Otisco's rise,
Not like the storied Rome on seven hills,
But far removed from vulgar fame and strife,
A single hill-top her sole charm distills

To all who pass her way,
And live their little day.

A church of God the fathers builded there,
 Fit symbol of their worshipful desire ;
 Four square to all the winds of Heaven it stood,
 While on its altars burned celestial fire,
 So none might stay away,
 Without a place to pray.

Like seed that finds its warm responsive soil,
 Keeping its hidden germ of life within,
 Quickened by rain and sun to burst its shell,
 And resurrected, a new life begin—
 So did this church of God
 Scatter its fruits abroad.

The famished soul has there its hunger stayed,
 The heavenly draught has cooled the burning thirst,
 Within her gates old age and youth have come,
 Strong men, sweet infancy in love immersed,
 Needing the gift divine—
 A portion in due time.

The crushing mill of death that grinds its grist,
 The joyful swain of lovers sweetly vowed,
 Baptismal names bestowed for earth and Heaven,
 And grace for grace for humble souls allowed,
 Are all recorded there,
 Upon her walls so fair.

Time fails to name a tithe of those who wrought,
 With little recompense of worldly gain,
 To preach the gospel of our Christ to all,
 And rob life's sorrow of its bitterest pain,
 But memory weaves a wreath
 She honors will bequeath.

Words cannot bring a tribute rich enough,
 Felicitations pale before the task—
 To those of noble mould and saintly life,
 Who serve their time in hope, and only ask
 To serve another day,
 If God shall point the way.

We call the roll, the fitful answers given
 Are like an echo from the past, that falls
 Upon the present with a hollow sound,
 And wakes to thought the very life it palls ;

We think of those passed on,
 They seem so quickly gone.

But are they dead—those lives that lived and loved ?
 Some yet remain, and some have moved afar—
 Those lives—the Cowles, Tuttles, Frisbies, Kings
 And other kindred souls, like morning star,
 The longest in the skies,
 With light that latest dies.

A thousand blessings for Otisco's hills,
 A thousand future years for her dear fane,
 A thousand cups of kindness for those lives
 That find their joy in humble Christly gain ;
 The path the fathers trod
 Is still the way to God.

John T. Roberts, of Syracuse, an elder in the Elmwood Presbyterian Church, spoke of some of the young people in the Otisco church in early days and of the influence that some of them have exerted upon society. He quoted from a letter, the original of which was recently found, written in 1824 by Willis Gaylord Clark, one of Otisco's most gifted sons, to his cousin Willis Gaylord, then residing here. The writer was at that time doing important editorial work in Philadelphia, and in this letter he recalled to his cousin's mind the hardship and struggle of the boyhood days. Many a time the writer said he had avoided meeting people whom he valued because of the shabby condition of his clothes. But this did not keep him from the services at the church, which he was very fond of attending, and to which he and his brother Lewis, as well as their cousin Willis, contributed much by their fine voices.

"We should value the sufferings and the sacrifices of those who laid the foundations of society," said the speaker, "for those are supplementary to the divine sacrifice. The crucifixion was not finished for us on Calvary, and no man is really saved by that suffering until he has borne his own cross and endured his own humiliation and grief."

This church was very early endued with a missionary spirit, and at a time when missionary effort was discouraged on theological grounds. Very strong was the opposition in those days, as appears from the minutes of the sessions of other surrounding churches. To bestir the heathen to a knowledge of sin, was thought to be a serious and awful error, unless it could be certainly known

that the awakened soul would be fully saved. Considering the vastness of the unsaved world, it would seem hopeless, in the light of that theory of salvation to attempt the general work of enlightening. But the Otisco church ignored the arguments of theology and followed the leadings of generous hearts. It has always led in missionary endeavor. Its first missionary society was formed in 1817, and that society has been a tower of strength to the church through all its history. To-day, there can be no non-missionary churches, and soon there can be no non-missionary Christians. The church or the individual that seeks merely self salvation, that looks upon suffering man without disquietude and makes no effort to assist or alleviate, will very likely miss salvation in the end.

In addition to the fostering of the missionary spirit and the contributing of means for the carrying out of Christian work in distant lands, this church, has reared a number of heroic workers for the mission field. Two of these are especially notable:—Mrs. Ann Eliza Cowles Crane who spent many years as missionary in Persia, and her sister Mrs. Loretta Cowles Hurd who worked in the the Home Missionary field in the distant west.

Rev. J. E. Beecher, a former pastor of this church, preached a thorough gospel sermon showing the necessity of a Christ to redeem a fallen race—that he should be clothed in the two natures—the human, to be an example, a pattern, for “every kindred, every tribe on this terrestrial ball” the divine, that he might form a bridge of safety for the sinner. He urged the necessity of teaching that God’s attributes of justice and judgment were as important as were those of charity and mercy.

He said too many churches were closed because they had no ordained preacher, but said the Otisco church always had some lay-reader, some Abraham to lead them, and each Sunday found the church open.

DEAR BRETHREN:—

I have been requested to speak on the old time Sabbath Service in the Otisco Church, as held in my boyhood. Of course it will require some tax of memory. I can remember back seventy years and over. As I spent a part of my boyhood in this place, I can recall some impressions of what I saw and heard in the services of the old Sanctuary. The audience room was large, with galleries capable of seating a good sized congregation, independent of the room below. In those days the great church would be full. Nobody thought of staying away from church. The early settlers of Otisco were from New England, full blooded Yankees, of genuine puritan stock, true as steel and honest as the sun. Their word was as good as a bank note. They had such confidence in their neighbors, and in mankind generally, that they did not even lock their doors at night. They needed no dogs to protect their homes. They believed in God, in the Bible, in the Sabbath, and in special Providence.

There were three or four services on every Sabbath in the house of God. Morning preaching service, Sunday School service, half hour intermission afternoon preaching service and a prayer meeting in the evening. The half hour intermission after Sunday School was generally occupied as lunch time. Doughnuts, cheese, apples, etc., constituted the principal menu. The crumbs falling on the floor made a rich feast for the poor church mouse. The Sabbath was their picnic day, which they enjoyed exceedingly. As to the church choir, it usually consisted of thirty or forty members, some more than you have now. The men sitting on one side of the gallery, and the women on the other side near one end of the church. No musical instruments were used in those early days, except when young John Baker would occasionally come in to play on his flute or violin. Deacon Johnson Cowles was the chorister, a man of blessed memory in the history of this church. There were no solos sung, or duets, or quartettes. The whole choir united in every hymn or song, and their music made the ceiling fairly ring with the echos of their melody. The congregation always rising while they sang. I well remember, too, how the quaint old Uncle Gladden used to stand up in prayer-time while all the rest of the congregation kept their seats, with bowed heads. His tall form, gray locks and wrinkled face made quite a figure as he stood up in his accustomed pew, near the pulpit, where the whole congregation could see him. He thought it irreverent and wicked to sit while the Throne of Grace was being addressed. And near him sat another novel character, Deacon Simeon Clark: he was a sort of church thermometer, or rather a sort of Theological barometer. He was always present, and on a hot day in summer in his shirt-sleeves, he cared little for style, but much for comfort. His posture in church was often singular; if he thought the sermon not sound or orthodox, he would bow his head as if asleep, or take his hat and walk out of church. But if the sermon was all right, orthodox as old John Calvin, he would sit erect, his eyes riveted on the preacher, and a smile of joy, on his face. The congregation could judge of the soundness of the preachers theology by the looks of the deacon's posture and countenance; yet with all his oddities and eccentricities, he was a most Godly man. As to the preachers of those early times, I can well remember the Rev. Richard S. Corning. He was past or here seventy years ago, a man of marked ability.

Another minister of this church whom I well remember was Rev. Mr. Colton, of Connecticut. I think he was not an installed Pastor, but a stated supply for a year or two. He was an odd, eccentric old man, bald as a bald-headed eagle, and homely as a hedge fence. I well remember how he used to swing a large red handkerchief in the pulpit when he made gestures. He would swing it around and wave it as though it was a flag. It was full of dots, but no stars or stripes on it. Perhaps he thought that the waving of that handkerchief would make the sermon more impressive, but the people thought otherwise. One Sabbath he preached on prayer and Providence, and related the following incident to illustrate his point: "When I was a young man, and just entered the

ministry, I wanted a wife. I laid the matter before the Lord, in prayer, and asked for divine guidance in the selection. One Sabbath, I exchanged pulpits with a neighboring minister, and before I finished my sermon I spied a young lady far back in the congregation, who just took my eye. After the service I was introduced to her. Within a week I popped the question, and within a month we were married; and she proved a gem of a woman and a jewel of a wife—prayer and Providence exemplified in practical life."

I remember, also, how we boys used to watch the eccentric old minister, when he pronounced benediction at the close of service. He would raise both hands high up, bow his head and bent his back clear over, till his nose would almost touch the open bible, and then he would drawl out a long, loud 'Amen'. It amused us boys, and we could not help watching the novel service. We never saw it done so before, and never have since. I remember, also, of his being invited one time to take tea at Deacon Clark's, at the foot of the Clark hill. It was customary, in those days, to ask a blessing on the food, at the beginning of the meal, and to return thanks at the close, all rising while thanks were being offered. The minister had used his handkerchief for a napkin, and laid it on the edge of the table, and when he rose and closed his eyes to return thanks, he reached out his hand to make sure of his handkerchief, and made a mistake, catching hold of the corner of the table-cloth and crowding it into his pants' pocket. In doing so, several dishes rattled off, down on to the floor, and broke into fragments. He kept right on returning thanks, as though nothing had occurred. At the close of the thank service, he paused, looked around and saw what he had done, and then remarked: "Quite a catastrophe! Might have been worse. Better to break a few dishes than to break our necks. And what a comfort that all things work together for good to those who love God." Thus he tried to cheer the family and sought to make them look on the bright side of misfortune. With all his eccentricities, he was a preacher of marked ability and devoted piety.

Another preacher over this church, with whom I had a partial acquaintance, was Rev. Medad Pomeroy, a solid, sound, orthodox preacher. He used to pray every Sabbath in the pulpit: "Oh, Lord, help us to keep the Sabbath holy, clear to the end on 't."

But the pastor with whom I was most intimate, was Rev. Addison K. Strong, who came here fifty-seven years ago—a young man fresh from the Seminary, an able preacher and a beloved pastor. During his pastoral of several years, many changes were wrought. The high church pulpit was lowered, the old square seats changed into modern style pews, the church repaired and musical instruments introduced. The church greatly prospered under his ministrations. I have been told that when he began his pastorate here, there was but one Irishman in town. There are more now, as you will all readily admit.

I had a slight acquaintance with Rev. Clement Lewis, who served the church a few years. Also a more extended acquaintance with Rev. I. O. Best

and Rev. John E. Beecher and Rev. Fenwick B. Fraser, all of whom did good work as pastors over this flock, for a short term of years.

Rev. Lemuel Jones was the last minister previous to the present occupant of the pulpit,—a man of blessed memory, and very useful in evangelistic work in this country and in England and Scotland, where he labored with Moody in revival work.

But allow me to turn from my subject to glance at the century gone by.

It has been a century of prosperity and adversity to this church—sunshine and storm. Sometimes on Pisgah's top, and at others down in the valley under a cloud. And that is more or less the experience of all churches in this ungodly wicked world. And we may indeed rejoice that, with all its changes during its hundred years of existence, the church still *lives* and *thrives*; the gospel is preached, and God worshipped by the people. And what a century of human *progress* it has been!

A hundred years ago, there was not a railroad in the world; nor steamboat, nor telegraph, nor telephone, nor bicycle, nor automobile. What a century of invention and discovery! If George Washington could rise from his Mount Vernon grave, and see a steamboat coming up the Potomac River, what would he think of it? And should he get on board and ride fifteen miles up to Washington, what would he think of the White House, and all the other massive government buildings, built since he died a hundred years ago? And, if there, he should step on board a train of cars, and ride to New York City at forty miles an hour, what would he think of it? And should he then step into a telegraph office, and hear the tick of the electric sparks, and be told that they were sending news on wires, across continents; and under the beds of seas, into all parts of the world, what would he think of it? Wouldn't he be surprised and rejoiced at the march of Empires from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the lakes to the gulf? But we pass on to glance at the century of progress in the moral and spiritual world.

It was a hundred years ago that William Carey baptized his first convert in India, and to-day there are a million and a half converts gathered into the kingdom, from the ranks of the great heathen world. A hundred years ago but few dollars were given for foreign missions, but now the annual gifts are about twenty millions. A hundred years ago, a very small number of missionaries were in the foreign fields. To-day, there are fifteen thousand of all denominations scattered over the world, kindling Gospel fires among the dark habitations of heathenism. Behold! what hath God wrought! And one of the noblest characteristics of this church has been its missionary spirit. Think of a Young People's Missionary Society which has been in active operation for more than fifty years, one of its members entering the foreign field, Ann Eliza Cowles Crane and her sister Loretta Hurd, the home field. Think of all the influences which have gone out from this organization! I have been told that not less than twenty young men have entered the Gospel Ministry from the

ranks of this church and congregation during its history of a hundred years. If so, it has been a fountain of pure water, to help purify the world,—a banyan tree spreading out its branches, and taking root in different parts of the earth,—a city set upon a hill whose light cannot be hid, a sun rising with healing in its beams of light, which have gladdened many a dark home and heart. And now, in closing, as we have been looking over the century past, let us cast a glance forward—a hundred years to come. Of course, we know not what the future history of this church will be. We can only pray and hope it will live and thrive, and be far more fruitful for good in the future than in the past.

In a hundred years from now, not one of us will be here—our bodies all under the sod mouldering back to dust. But where will our souls be? In Paradise or in Perdition? That will depend wholly on how we live here. He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life, and he that believeth not shall not see life. Faith and unbelief are the *hinges* on which our destiny turns *forever*. May we all so live that our faith and prayer and benevolence may help mould the history and character of this church in the century to come. May its pastors be men of God; its members bright and shining lights in the home, in the church, in the community, in the world. May there be in store for this people great refreshings from on high: baptism of the Holy Spirit. May this Sanctuary often be filled, like the Temple of old, with the glory of God, and be a place where his name shall be honored.—the gate of Heaven to souls, through which many will pass, and enter into that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; that city which needs no light of the sun or moon to shine in it, for the glory of God and the Lamb are the light thereof.

Herodotus, the father of history, speaks of an ancient Midian city which had seven walls surrounding it, all differently colored. The outside wall was white, the next one black, the third purple, the fourth blue, the fifth orange, the sixth plated with silver, the seventh plated with gold. It was the strongest and most magnificent city on the planet, and had the most magnificent temple in the centre, on which the sun evershone, except Solomon's Temple. Yet that beautiful, rich, seven walled city was but a hamlet of *pawerly* compared with the New Jerusalem above, with its walls of jasper and gates of pearl and streets of gold, built for the ransomed of the Lord. In that city of our God, the church triumphant will be gathered, and dwell in houses not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. May we all be among the happy number.

REMINISCENCES BY

REV. W. B. DADA, ONONDAGA VALLEY.

A list of the Clergymen, Deacons and Choristers
who have served this church.

REVERENDS.

George Cloton	Alvin Baker
Wm. J. Wilcox	James S. Baker
Charles Johnston	I. O. Best
R. S. Corning	R. C. Allison
Levi Parsons	Edward A. Strong
Levi Griswold	John Brash
Sidney Mills	Henry Hudson
Thaddeus Pomeroy	J. J. Munroe
A. K. Strong	J. E. Beecher
Levi Parsons, Jr.	F. B. Frazer
Medad Pomeroy	A. K. Strong
S. Mills Day	Wm. B. Dada
Drake	Lemuel Jones
J. M. Jenks	George Jones

DEACONS.

Samuel French	<i>d. July 13, '32 a. 88</i>	Nathaniel B. Searl
Amos Cowles		John C. Hitchcock
Simeon T. Clark		I. Tyler Frisbie
Cephius Parsons		Wm. N. Tuttle
Zephany Merriman		S. N. Cowles
Joel Danforth		H. L. Cowles
Benjamin J. Cowles		Lewis M. Ellis

CHORISTERS.

Apollos King	Abraham Wilkin, Jr.
Dr. Luther French	Chauncey J. King
Zarah D. Howe	Evander W. King
Dr. Ashbel Searl	Almon T. Clark
Henry Graves	Gilbert R. French
Joel Danforth	Henry L. Cowles
B. J. Cowles	Lewis M. Ellis
H. W. Noyes	

The first Choir was composed of Apollos King, Ornan King, bass-viol, Mary King, afterwards Mrs. Dea. Clark, Sally King, Lydia King, who married Eben Cowles, and Submit Janes, who became Mrs. T. F. King. The present Chorister, E. W. King, has been connected with the choir for fifty-six years and has a good voice for leader yet.

Zarah D. Howe moved to Strongsville, Ohio, early in 1818, but the pitch-pipe he used to get the key in starting a piece of music is in existence yet, and highly prized by his descendants.

The Ladies' Home Missionary Society was organized in 1815 and ranks in age with any similar society in Central N. Y.

The Youths' Missionary Society started fifty-seven years ago, has extended its membership so as to include persons of all ages.

One thing which this church has stood for, and that is harmony. No discord has ever arisen between Clergy, Deacons, Choir or people. The Laity have always done their part of the church work. This is shown in two notable instances—the first church was built while they had no pastor, and Rev. Mr.

Beecher had so created a sentiment in favor of a new church, at the time he left, that the laymen would have built the present edifice even had the pastorate continued vacant. This is no reflection on any clergyman, but rather shows the compact momentum of the Laity.

The new century opens with a good promise before it. Rev. Mr. Jones seems to have the generous support of a united people, and Pastor and congregation are happy in all their relations.

E. P. H.

SYRACUSE PUBLIC LIBRARY.



Benjamin Cowles, d. July 30, 1838 ae. 73

Capt. Eliakim Clark, d. Apr 21, 1828 ae. 65-10-19

Dea. Samuel French, d. July 13, 1832 ae 88

Ebenezer French jr. d. Nov 17, 1844 ae. 87-5-11

Dr. John Davis, d. Mar 20, 1846 ae 85-11-11

Mrs Polly Stewart Bartwell, b. in East Haddam Aug 19, 1776, dau Joseph Stewart a Revolutionary soldier died in Otisco, Mar 4, 1877 aged over 100 years
She has been a resident of Otisco since 1818 (Obituary)

Ebenezer French had son Ebenezer & Des Samuel early in
Otisco - father in Lexington Alcorn -

Des. Samuel French d. July 13. 1832 at 88, app. / dece. in Otisco 1803
Ebenezer French d. Nov 17. 1844 at 87-5-11
Rachael his wife, d. Jan 21. 1833 at 64-9-22

Dr Luther French b. Son of Ebenezer French & Ann S. French
a member of the organization of the Presbyterian church in Oliva in
1803. his children Doris b. ^{Mar 14} 1795 in Perley Horne d. Aug 11, 1830
Asahel b 1797